tion, should be invariably defined; and as you yourself, Sir, have frequently urged, the extravagant custom of bedizening them in gold frames, &c., should be forbidden.

Other Papers.—Many architects accompany their designs with printed circulars, engraved views, &c., and some even with builders' tenders. I don't blame them under the present *roly-poly* system, but under an amended system, I would forbid all this at once, strictly limiting the number and kind of documents to be supplied by each competitor, so as to place all on an equality, and leave the design to what after all it must come to, if executed, *its naked merit*.

Prizes.—Five per cent. ought, in all competition cases, to be paid, and in order to put an end to all canvassing and cheapening ought to be openly guaranteed by the committee, who should offer in small competitions a second and third, and in large competitions a fourth and fifth premium, as the case may require. A *first* premium is an absurdity, *never contended for*, and in *fair* competitions seldom paid; *its* amount will supply funds for two secondary premiums.

Estimates.—As to the estimated cost of each design, I would, after stating what really were the resources of the committee, leave every competitor at liberty to state what sum he thought fit; but as to committees selecting a design by such a criterion as a competitor's estimate, there can be, I conceive, no greater folly: and yet as committees almost invariably constitute this their test of merit or eligibility, who can wonder at competitors, in a wicked world like ours, yielding to the temptation to put down the very lowest figure which an acquaintance with your weekly list of "Blind Builders" may suggest to them?

Decisions.—In judging of the accuracy of the estimate of any design the committee may take to, or of its efficient construction or arrangement, they should be guided by the opinion of some non-competing professional man, to be recommended by the general voice of the competitors. Each competitor should, therefore, submit with his design the name of some one or more non-competing architects, to whose judgment and experience he himself would be willing to refer the committee for guidance. This method, I may state, was actually adopted (by the Committee's especial request), in the case of the competition for the Blackburn Exchange; and, beaten competitor as I was in that case, I have always considered it the fairest competition I have ever engaged in.

Y.

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

APPEAL AGAINST RATE IN POPLAR.

A GENERAL court was held on Monday last, which was originally intended to have been held on Saturday, but was postponed in consequence of sufficient members not being present to form a quorum. In the interim, notices had been sent to every member of the commission, impressing upon them the necessity of their attendance. Some time after the hour for commencing business, however, only five members were present. As only one hour is allowed from the time named for the court to an adjournment to a future day, it was agreed by the parties who had appeals to prosecute that the business should proceed with but five members. Sir John Burgoyne took the chair.

The Rating of Poplar.—The secretary (Mr. Woolrych) read a notice of appeal from Mr. John Carter, of High-street, Poplar, against the rates made upon him for that division.

Mr. Needham, the barrister, on behalf of appellant, proceeded to state his case. It appeared that the appellant, with several other persons, occupied premises situate on the north side of Poplar ditch. From time immemorial the inhabitants of this district had never been rated to the sewers rate, as it was a condition of their tenure that they should cleanse out and keep in repair a ditch which bounded their property. In the year 1826 an attempt was made by the Commissioners of Sewers for Poplar Marsh district to rate property in this neighbourhood, which was resisted, and an action at law was the result of this demand. The case was tried by a special jury in London, before Lord Chief-Justice Abbot (afterwards Lord Tenterden), Mr. (now Lord) Brougham appearing for the Sewers Commissioners. The case occupied a considerable time, and the evidence was very voluminous. As it was most material, and might guide their decision in the present question, he would recite the three points prominently placed before the jury by the learned judge on that occasion.

"First. Whether the owners and occupiers of the land and ground lying contiguous to and on the north side of the ditch have, from time immemorial, by reason of their tenure of these grounds, been compellable to scour the Poplar ditch.

Second. Whether the occupiers of the land on the north side of the ditch have, by reason of the obligation that the law casts upon them to scour this ditch, been exempt from all other expenses of the level, whether they have been exempted by reason of that charge.

The third question is quite distinct,—Whether, in your judgment, the plaintiff's house derives any benefit from the works done by the commissioners, or under their superintendence."

In the two first cases, the jury answered in the affirmative, and in the latter in the negative. He contended that this question was precisely identical, [illegible] with the present case. He thought, therefore, that, as it was the practice in Westminster-hall, when once a case had been solemnly argued, to consider it as conclusively determined, and never to be re-opened unless some error was apparent,—that court would hesitate before they reversed the judgment that had been given by Lord Chief Justice Abbott, and with the caution with which he approached such a question. The learned counsel reiterated his arguments, and in support of them quoted the following words of the 76th section of the present Sewers Act:—"Provided also that where, in any separate sewerage district, any property is by law or by the practice of the existing Commissioners of Sewers entitled to exemption wholly or partially from, or to any reduction or allowance in respect of, the sewer-rates, the commissioners shall, in making the district sewer-rate, observe and allow such exemption, reduction, or allowance."

Mr. Leslie said the question was, whether the appellant derived any benefit from the works of the commissioners, and whether the circumstances of 1826 were similar with those of 1849? Whether the circumstances brought before Lord Chief Justice Abbott were not changed by the operation of the 37th section of the present Act, which declares "that all sewers, sluices, &c., within the limits of the commission, shall be subject to the survey, order, and control of the commissioners, according to the provisions and subject to the regulations and restrictions of this Act."

Mr. Needham then called as witnesses, Mr. Carter and Mr. Morris, the former proving that no sewer-rate had ever been charged upon this property, and the latter, that until last year no sewer [illegible] had any jurisdiction over the Poplar ditch.

It was also given in evidence, that as the guardians of the poor of Poplar had turned the drainage of the workhouse into this ditch, they passed from 8,000 to 10,000 gallons of clean water into it: the Commissioners of Sewers had brought into it the drainage of 300 houses, with only the filthy refuse.

On the part of the commissioners, Mr. Phillips, the surveyor, was examined by the chairman, who stated that Mr. Carter and every other inhabitant of Poplar derived benefit from the works of the commission. The Poplar ditch was periodically attended to by the officers of the commission. If the outlet were not looked to, Mr. Carter's premises would be flooded. The whole of the cesspools in the workhouse had been abolished, and the inconvenience and expense of cleansing them had of course been avoided. The ditch was flushed by every tide, and washed into the Thames at the expense of the sewer-rates.

Mr. Woolrych then addressed the court, and said there were two questions to consider; first, whether the appellant derived any benefit? and, secondly, if he had derived any benefit, whether he had made out to the satisfaction of the commissioners that he was exempt from liability from some prescriptive usage? Assuming the benefit to be proved, there was no evidence to support the latter proposition.

Mr. Leslie ultimately moved—"That the rate made on the Poplar district be confirmed;" which was put and agreed to; and after a sitting of nearly six hours the court adjourned.

A general court was held on Thursday, the 6th; Sir John Burgoyne in the chair.—A recommendation was received from the Finance Committee to grant Mr. Samuel Page, late surveyor, a retiring allowance of 100*l.* a-year, out of the Holborn and Finsbury division, to commence from March 25, 1848. It appearing that he had been in the service of the late commission for upwards of forty years, the recommendation was unanimously agreed to.

The Question of Flushing.—Mr. Bullar said, as great doubts existed as to the propriety of flushing, and as it was evident that if it was not good they must discontinue it, but, if good, that it should be more extensively adopted, he begged to move—"That a circular letter be forthwith sent to the various medical practitioners holding union or parochial appointments throughout the rated districts, requesting them to favour the commissioners on or before the 11th inst. with their opinion (resulting from their own observation) of the effect which the flushing of any sewers has had on the health of those who reside in the neighbourhood of those sewers."

The following resolution was also agreed to:—"That having regard to the present condition of the health of the metropolis, the Trial Works Committee be authorised to expend a sum not exceeding 250*l.* for the ventilation and trapping of sewers in those places they would think beneficial."

A deputation attended the Court from the parishes of Camberwell and Newington, representing the offensive state of these neighbourhoods, caused, as the memorialists believed, by the discharge of cesspools into the public sewers, and calling upon the Commissioners to suspend the operations of flushing until a colder season. The surveyor of the district was ordered to fully report on the subject, Mr. Leslie contending that the works of the district were a disgrace to the commission, particularly in the case of the Friar-street sewer, upon which they had a report from their own officers upwards of twelve months since.

Improvement of the Drainage of Westminster.—A long report was presented to the Court by Mr. Gotto, on the state of the drainage of Westminster, embracing plans for its improvement, to be carried on concurrently with the works of the Westminster Improvement Commissioners. The report recommended that a new surface and subsoil sewer, 5 feet in diameter, be constructed from Richmond-terrace, Whitehall, along Parliament-street, and across the Broad Sanctuary, at Westminster, to the commencement of the new Victoria-street, a distance of 2,200 feet, and to be continued along New Victoria-street, 4 feet in diameter, for a distance of 3,000 feet, at an expense of 8,142*l.*, on condition that the Westminster Improvement Commissioners pay the sum of 3,375*l.*; that the work be executed by public tender, and that the works be executed forthwith, to save the inconvenience of interruption of the traffic during the session of Parliament.

Sir Edward Pearson attended on behalf of the Westminster Commissioners, and impressed upon the Court the necessity of some immediate action in this neighbourhood, and that unless something was proceeded with, the whole works of the Improvement Commissioners, so peculiarly constituted were they under their Act of Parliament, must fall to the ground.

Mr. Gotto gave it as his decided opinion that his plan would not at all affect the ultimate propositions for the entire drainage of London, and that this work might safely be executed without present reference to them. It was ultimately resolved—"That Mr. Gotto's report on the Westminster Improvement Sewerage be approved, and that on the payment by the Westminster Improvement Commissioners of 3,375*l.*, as recommended by that report, the works specified be executed, and that tenders for these works be immediately advertised, and when received be opened by the Works Committee."

A resolution was then agreed to calling for a return of attendances by commissioners.

A very voluminous report was presented by Mr. Grant, on the state of Albion-terrace, Wandsworth-road, being a detailed statement explanatory of a short report presented at a former court. It stated, that up to the closing of his report, the deaths in that terrace had been increased to fifty, and that the whole of seventeen houses were now unoccupied. The subject of the water-supply was treated upon at great length, the water had been submitted to a chemist for analyzation. (Samples of the water were produced in the court, and that taken from two of the cisterns closely resembled ink in colour, with a most foetid odour.) It generally attributed the disease to the overflowing of the cesspools into the water cisterns, and recommended that the cesspools should be abolished, and a supply of water obtained from the water company in lieu of the present mode of supply from an adjoining well.

A discussion ensued as to how far the commission were responsible for the fatality that had occurred, Mr. Leslie contending that it was a question that rested entirely with the landlords and their tenants.

This opinion appeared to be generally received by the court, and Mr. Grant was ordered to put himself in communication with the owners of the property, to afford them any information, but the court declined to proceed in the matter.

A letter was received from Mr. Smith, vestry-clerk of Richmond, stating that the parish approved of the plan of Mr. G. Donaldson for an improved drainage, and wished to see it carried into effect as speedily as possible.

In the case of Mr. Dennis, of Bath-place, Chalk-road, who had been ordered to do certain works, and positively refused to do the same, it was ordered that the commission do execute the works, and charge Mr. Dennis with the expenses; the amount to be recovered by distress or otherwise, if such a course should be found necessary.

WARRINGTON CHURCH.—Mr. Caveler has nearly completed a work illustrative of this building. The specimens we have seen are capitally drawn.

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